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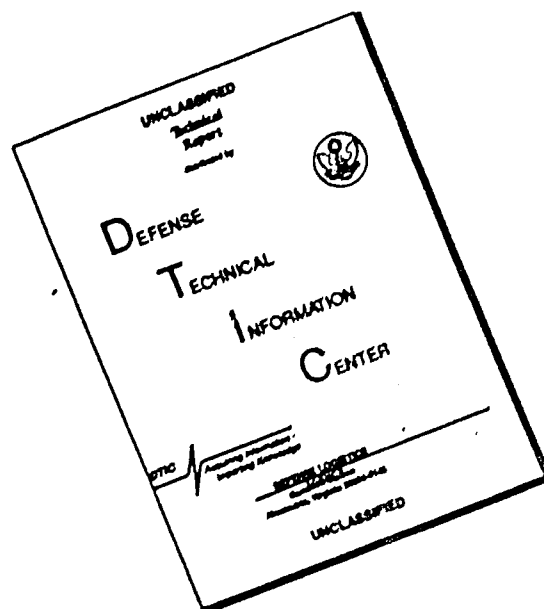
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (11 May 67) FOR OT

15 May 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, HQ, 54th Signal Battalion (Corps)

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Forwarded as inclosure is Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 54th Signal Battalion (Corps) for quarterly period ending 31 January 1967. Information contained in this report should be reviewed and evaluated by CDC in accordance with paragraph 6f of AR 1-19 and by CONARC in accordance with paragraph 6c and d of AR 1-19. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to the Commandants of the Service Schools to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

FEB 28 1968

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 54TH SIGNAL BATTALION (CORPS)
APO San Francisco, California 96350

AVFA-SB

7 February 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967
(RCS CSFOR-65)

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C. 20310

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SECTION I SIGNIFICANT UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. General - This section is divided into four parts under the headings of operations and training, logistics, personnel, and civil affairs. During this quarter the battalion was more heavily committed to communications support of IFFV operations than in any previous quarter.

2. Operations and Training Activities

a. Operations.

(1) The 54th Signal Battalion continued to provide tactical communications support for I Field Force Vietnam. The battalion's resources were placed throughout the II Corps Tactical Zone to extend the command - control communications to the subordinate OPCON units of IFFV. At the Grand Hotel Main CP Complex in Nha Trang, comcenter, high frequency radio, wire operations, secured telephone facility, VHF radio and carrier operations, photographic support, AFRS, RWI, and MARS services were provided. During a typical day the comcenter handled 2000 messages, over 50% of which were of immediate precedence. The Typhoon switchboard on an average day handled between 4000 and 5000 calls, this figure not including the calls handled by the Tactical Operational Center (TOC) and Direct Support Center (DASC) Switchboards which are facilities dedicated to handling immediate calls dealing with tactical operations and close air support.

(2) During this same period, the battalion provided communications between Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, and its subordinate OPCON units. Detachments were also provided in support of liaison officers with the two ROK Divisions in the II Corps Tactical Zone. These units were

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spread throughout the largest tactical zone in Vietnam, covering an area which is about four times larger than that over which a corps signal battalion is designed to operate. The battalion operated between ten and fourteen detachments in the field with the major tactical units.

(3) The months of November, December, and January were active months for the battalion. More detachments and more equipment was committed and operated in the field by the battalion than in any previous quarter. Headquarters, IFFV assumed operational control over two additional units and established a Tac CP during the quarter. Battalion detachments provided communications support to meet these requirements and, in addition, provided the required communications support for eight combat operations.

(a) Operation BYRD

A detachment was provided to support the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Cav Regiment during combat operations in the Phan Thiet area. This detachment consisted of an HF Radio Team with AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A, and a message center team with AN/MGC-17 to provide a secure termination facility for land line teletype from IFFV Headquarters. Air courier service was provided daily.

(b) Operation THAYER II

The battalion provided three detachments to support the 1st Cav (AM) during this combat operation. One detachment was permanently located at the division base camp at An Khe. The detachment consisted of four radio relay teams with three AN/MRC-73s and two AN/MRC-54s, and one HF radio relay team with AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A. This detachment provided communications support for division elements at this location. Another detachment was located at the communications nodal point south of Qui Nhon (Vung Chua Mountain). The mission of this detachment was to extend command-control circuitry from this point to the base camp and field CP locations. This detachment consisted of three VHF Radio Relay teams with one AN/MCC-6, one AN/MRC-54, and two AN/MRC-73s. A third detachment was positioned at Hammond and supported the Division's forward elements there. This area was initially used for a CP location for the 3rd Brigade and was later expanded into the division's forward CP. Communications consisted of VHF carrier and VHF Radio Relay teams with one AN/MRC-54 and AN/MCC-6 operational. The VHF system provided was primarily engineered to provide the division access into the in-country system and communications back to the base camp at An Khe. After the first of the year, the 1st Cavalry Division displaced from An Khe to Hammond and this detachment was augmented with four additional radio relay teams with two AN/MRC-73s and two AN/MRC-54s and a HF team with an AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A's. Several VHF test shots were conducted during this period. Results of these shots indicated that a direct 12-channel system from An Khe to Bong Son, and Vung Chua Mountain to Bong Son would be marginal. Normal air courier service was provided during this operation.

(c) Operations PAUL REVERE IV and SAM HOUSTON

The 4th Division and the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Cav Division (AM) conducted combat operations in the Pleiku area. A small signal detachment was provided to support this operation. Two radio relay teams with one AN/MRC-54, one AN/MRC-73, and one AN/MCC-6 were installed for this commitment. A VHF system was installed between Pleiku and Dragon Mountain to extend command and control circuits from the communications nodal point to the division CP. A parallel system to the 2nd Brigade was relayed through Dragon Mountain to Oasis, the Brigade's CP. This second system was used to extend circuits from the 1st Cavalry Division Base Camp at An Khe to the brigade. Normal air courier service was provided to both locations. The support for the 4th Division remained the same during Operation Sam Houston.

(d) Operation GERONIMO

The 54th Signal Battalion continued to support the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division during this combat operation in the Tuy Hoa area. A signal detachment was provided and it contained three Radio Relay Teams with four AN/MRC-73s and one AN/MRC-54. Terrain reconnaissance and test shots made in the Tuy Hoa area suggested that direct 12-channel systems could be installed from Vung Chua to Phu Hiep, and from Phu Hiep to Cung Son. However, frequency selection was critical. An HF team with AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A was also provided. Normal air courier was operated daily.

(e) IFFV Tac CP

A tactical command post was established by IFFV in Pleiku during the early part of December. A large detachment was provided to support this operation. The detachment consisted of a comcenter team with an AN/MSC-29, an HF team with AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A, an operator with an FM RWI set, a wire operations section which operated an AN/ITC-3 and an SB-675/MSC and several VHF Radio Relay carrier teams with one AN/MRC-54, one AN/MCC-6, three AN/MRC-73s and two MRC-112s. Also, several wire teams were employed to install CP wiring and long locals. The communications for the Tac CP were completely operational within 48 hours after all battalion elements had been air-lifted by C-130 to the CP location. To control the installation, operation, and maintenance of this complex, a battalion facilities control (FACON) was established in the vicinity of the Tac CP in the patch panel. The FACON facilitated systems control and provided a point of contact with the STRATCOM Technical Control Group personnel and the DCA-S&M representatives. VHF Radio Relay systems were established to all OPCON units under the Tac CP's control. Duplicate circuits were extended via these systems from both the main CP in Nha Trang and the Tac CP. The in-country system was employed to provide circuitry between the Main CP and the Tac CP. The Tac CP became the alternate NCS in both the command R&TT and SSB nets. A switchboard was established and all staff sections represented at the CP were interconnected. RWI was also provided. Scheduled and special air courier service support was operated on a daily basis.

(f) Operation FARRAGUT

During the month of January, the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division displaced from Kontum to its Base Camp at Phang Rang. From this location it conducted combat operations. A signal detachment was dispatched from Nha Trang and joined the brigade. Several test shots were made before this detachment was sent. The detachment consisted of several VHF radio relay teams with five AN/MRC-73s and one MRC-54. When required, an HF radio team with AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A's will be deployed from Nha Trang. Normal air courier service was provided daily.

(f) Operation PICKETT

The battalion provided communications support for the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division during its combat operations in the Kontum area. A detachment consisting of four VHF Radio Relay Teams with two AN/MRC-73s, two AN/MRC-54s, and one AN/MCC-6, one HF radio team with AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A was provided. To extend the circuitry from the IFFV Tac CP and the in-country system two 12-channel VHF systems were installed directly from Pleiku to Kontum. These systems were never satisfactory i.e. noisy, low signal levels, and fading. Based on terrain reconnaissance made by the Battalion Commander and his staff a relay was established near the Folei Kleng Airfield and both systems were relayed at this point. System quality improved greatly and these systems remained installed this way for the duration of the exercise. Courier service was provided on a scheduled and special basis.

(h) Operation ADAMS

Signal support was provided to the 1st Brigade, 4th Division during their combat operations in the Tuy Hoa area. This support consisted of a detachment which contained several VHF Radio Relay Teams with one AN/MRC-54, four (4) AN/MRC-73s and one MCC-6. An HF radio team with an AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2A was also provided. Normal air courier was operated daily.

(4) During the quarter the Photo Section of the 54th Signal Battalion provided both support to Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam as well as support to units in the Nha Trang area.

(a) Direct photographic support to combat operations is detailed below:

<u>DATES</u>	<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHERS</u>
19-26 Oct	SEWARD	1
31 Oct - 4 Nov	GERONIMO	1
10 Nov - 17 Nov	THAYER II	1
6-17 Dec	PICKET	1
6-17 Dec	IFFV Tac CP	1

<u>DATES</u>	<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHERS</u>
7-21 Jan	THAYER II	2
15-22 Jan	PICKET	2
15-24 Jan	PICKET	2

(b) Area support missions included coverage for accident and security investigations, unit records, news releases, and special reports.

(c) The total production for the Photo Section is shown below:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>NEGATIVES</u>	<u>PRINTS</u>
November	6,693	10,121
December	5,181	8,464
January	<u>6,854</u>	<u>9,236</u>
TOTAL	18,728	27,821

(d) An answer was received to an EIR for the 70mm Combat Camera submitted during the previous quarter. The answer stated that the camera was scheduled to be phased out of the Army supply system.

(e) Five Yashica twin lens reflex cameras (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch film) were procured and proved rugged and reliable in the field.

(5) During the past three-month period, the Battalion Aviation Section flew 1953 sorties, transporting 830 personnel and 69 tons of material in support of IFFV Combat Operations. A total of 942 hours were flown, with aviators averaging over 89 flying hours per month. Aircraft availability and hours flown are shown below:

<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>NUMBER ASSIGNED</u>	<u>PER CENT AVAIL</u>	<u>HRS FLOWN</u>
OH13	2	59%	273
UH1D	2*	71%	474
U6A	2*	45%	195

* One UH1B helicopter SN63-8565 turned in to direct support maintenance on 21 December 66 for CONUS evacuation and modernization. UH1C helicopter SN64-14149 loaned from direct support maintenance during the period 6-31 Jan 67.

** One U6A aircraft SN53-3735 turned in to direct support maintenance to 63rd PE 26 Oct 66. Aircraft determined to require extensive sheet metal work by general support maintenance. General support maintenance recommended aircraft for evacuation to CONUS. Administrative delays caused aircraft evacuation to slip to Dec 66. For the purposes of this report, aircraft considered a loss after 31 Nov 66. No replacement aircraft was issued.

b. Training.

(1) Training remained an important mission for the battalion in both the formal training and OJT areas.

(2) A representative of General Dynamics Corporation conducted classes on the operation of the AN/GRC-106 radio during the period 15-17 December. All available radio operators attended formal classes and were subsequently given practical exercises.

(3) Three telephone installers reported to the 2nd Signal Group's Telephone Management Agency in Ton Son Nhut for training in the operation and installation of Japanese push-button dial intercom telephones. One installer attended during the period 2 January through 5 January and two attended during the period 23 January through 26 January. These telephones are installed in the Headquarters of IFFV in Nha Trang and are maintained by the 54th Signal Battalion.

(4) Plans were made to give a preventive maintenance course in February for all battalion officers to encompass engineer, ordnance, and signal maintenance procedures.

(5) Plans were made to give a course in the operation of the AN/GRC-26 and KWM-2 radios with instruction in operator maintenance to be included.

(6) B Company and the 167th Radio Relay Company conducted extensive training in the operation of the AN/MRC-112. The battalion received eight MRC-112s; seven additional sets are due in. Formal classes were conducted by B Company in November and were followed by practical application to include deployment of teams to install test shots. Test shots were successfully installed between Van Canh Special Forces Camp and Vung Chua Mountain, Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp to Pleiku, and Kontum to Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp. The 167th Radio Relay Company teams were successfully deployed for the installation of test shots in the Nha Trang area.

(7) All personnel of the newly arrived 167th Radio Relay Company were given a three hour orientation briefing by the Battalion Commander and his staff. Three such briefings were given in order to brief personnel within 24 hours of their arrival in-country.

(8) All officers and Key NCO's in the 167th Radio Relay Company received a guided tour through all staff and operating sections. The tour was given in mid-December.

(9) Plans were made to send a cryptographic repairman to An Khe to attend a course in KY-8 operation and maintenance which begins on 6 February.

(10) Formal classes were conducted by several sections (Electronic Maintenance, Motor Maintenance, Aviation Section, and VHF Platoons) along with continuing programs of on-the-job training by all sections.

3. Logistics

a. General - The logistical elements of the battalion expended maximum efforts to fully support the operational commitments of the battalion throughout the II Corps Tactical Zone. The increasing age of the battalion's electronic equipment coupled with the extreme climatic conditions are maximizing the maintenance problems of the battalion. Maintenance of AN/GRC-26 radios, Collins KWM-2 radios, and generators proved troublesome during this quarterly period. Both organizational and support maintenance activities have been alerted as to the importance of this equipment to the battalion's operational requirements. Furthermore, in addition to the normal and routine supply actions the following has been accomplished in the logistics area:

(1) Electronic maintenance and the S-4 storage facilities were moved out of the battalion motor pool area to make room for the newly arrived 167th Radio Relay Company.

(2) Most of the tents in the battalion area have been replaced with new tents. This action fulfilled a critical need.

(3) A detailed SOP on PLL operations is near completion. Continuing emphasis is being placed on PLL operations.

(4) Four convoys were taken to Cam Ranh Bay to get supplies for the 167th Radio Relay Company and other sections of the battalion.

(5) A total of twenty engineer work orders were processed, thirteen were approved and seven have been completed.

(6) Over \$500 were spent for imprest fund purchases for essential items not available through supply channels.

(7) Five cameras were purchased through the imprest fund to temporarily replace deadlined cameras.

b. Unservicable Equipment.

Many items have been returned from support maintenance to be turned in as unservicable. A total of 16 electronic components and 9 cameras have been turned in. Replacements have been requisitioned. The oldest requisition was submitted on 6286. None of these items have been received.

c. Support Maintenance.

The following statistics indicate the progress of support maintenance:

DATE	<u>6220</u>	<u>6304</u>	<u>7029</u>
Total Engineer Work Orders	69	72	27
Over 30 days	59	19	10
Over 60 days	27	15	10
Total Signal Work Orders	83	42	42
Over 30 days	48	11	21
Over 60 days	18	3	15

The signal equipment deadlined more than 30 and 60 days is mainly HF radio, new series FM radios, and single side band equipment (Collins KWM-2).

d. Organizational Maintenance.

	<u>6220</u>	<u>6304</u>	<u>7029</u>
Engineer Deadline	80	45	41
Signal Deadline	83	39	57

(1) An explanation of the high generator deadline and an evaluation of the new air cooled generators was requested by USARV (USARV message AVAGH-MD 42594). A meeting was held at the 54th Signal Battalion to prepare a reply. The meeting was attended by Company Commanders, Detachment Commanders, Organizational Maintenance Personnel, Direct Support Maintenance Personnel, and a representative from G-4 (Maint) IFFV. The findings of the meeting were:

(a) Operator and supervisor training is required to insure proper use of the air cooled generators.

(b) The M103A3 trailer should be used exclusively with air cooled generators. The M105A1, currently on hand, does not provide proper ventilation for the air cooled generators (SF-10 and J-109) during operation.

e. Transportation.

(1) On 22 December, two AN/MRC-112's were scheduled to fly to Phan Thiet by C7A. The AN/MRC-112 is mounted in a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton trailer and is towed by a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton truck in which the power units (2 ea 1.5 KW Generators) are mounted. Together the trailer and truck weigh less than 5000 lbs. and can be readily loaded on a single C7A. On the 22 December mission, both trailers were loaded on the aircraft and flown to Phan Thiet and Song Mau. The aircraft then

returned to Nha Trang for the $\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks. The aircraft was unable to land at Song Mau on the return trip because the airport was closed. The AN/MRC-112 and crew at Song Mau were stranded without the prime mover and power units for 5 days.

(2) Bad weather from 2 December through 6 December prevented the use of C7A flights. Critically needed generators were eventually moved by C-130 to Qui Nhon and carried by convoy to Hammond. Scheduled flights to Hammond were not available. A courier accompanied the generators to Qui Nhon.

(3) A C-130 mission scheduled to move 2 each AN/MRC's, 2 each $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks, and 2 each $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton trailer mounted generator sets was partially completed when the aircraft were diverted for higher priority missions. The personnel arrived at the destination as scheduled but most of their equipment remained in Nha Trang until 27 January. On 27 January the last of the equipment (2 each AN/MRC-73's) left Nha Trang. The equipment did not arrive at the destination until 1 February.

f. Supply.

(1) A-Band accessories for VHF systems were ordered on 6029. The total value of the equipment was \$146,522. Over \$50,000 of the shipments were received. The requirement for A-Band equipment no longer exists. Most items received have been turned in and the outstanding requisitions cancelled.

(2) Switchboard assemblies were received to reconstitute 2 each AN/MTC-1's which were stripped to provide equipment for Typhoon Switchboard. The equipment and shelters have been turned over to the 578th Light Maintenance Company for reconstitution.

g. Arrival of the 167th Radio Relay Company.

(1) A ten-position latrine and twenty GP Medium tents were erected prior to the arrival. The following supplies were available upon arrival:

- Electrical wiring
- 20,120 board feet of lumber
- 107 Sheets of plywood
- 5000 sandbags
- mess hall chairs and tables
- office furniture
- beds and mattresses for 50% of the personnel
- folding cots
- refrigerators-freezers

(2) The officers and men of the 167th Radio Relay Company energetically used the resources and materials provided them to construct in record time relatively comfortable base camp facilities. Consequently, within a month after their arrival the 167th RR Co had completed the major portion of its base camp construction and was ready for operational deployment.

4. Personnel

a. Health-Welfare-Morale

(1) Health

On the 29th of January the Battalion shower facility was officially dedicated. Its completion and present use have been a real boon to troop morale in addition to alleviating the unsanitary bathing conditions that existed heretofore.

(2) Mail

With the arrival of the 43rd APU the battalion, at present, handles the mail for just one other I Field Force Unit stationed in Camp McDermott. This has resulted in relief for the battalion mail clerks and permits more expeditious service. The battalion air section continues to deliver mail to the battalion detachments supporting I Field Force OPCON units in the II Corps Tactical Zone.

(3) R & R

the last quarter has seen the battalion receive 105 R&R allocations with 93 of them being utilized. Most of the 12 allocations that were not utilized resulted from last minute cancellations due to unusual circumstances such as emergency leaves, hospitalization, and operational requirements.

(4) A & R

January 1 saw the dedication of the ~~battalion~~ basketball court which is open to the personnel of all units in Camp McDermott. The interest and resultant spirit generated from its use has been most rewarding, and it is a positive implementation of any piaster reduction program as it tends to keep the men in Camp McDermott. In the offing is a battalion level, intra-mural type, basketball tournament scheduled to begin in early February, and plans for a thoroughly supervised boxing program to include occasional boxing smokers.

(5) Venereal Disease

The VD rate during this reporting period has increased considerably. It has risen from 45 reported cases for the last quarter to 86 for this one. It is suspected that the holiday period was a substantial contributing factor for the increase. Additional emphasis is being placed on this subject during the initial in-country briefing and during scheduled Commander's Time Conference.

(6) Military Police Reports

a. During this reporting period there were 28 military police reports. Eight were curfew violations, nine were traffic violations, and 11 were miscellaneous type offenses.

b. Courts and Boards

(1) During the reporting period the battalion commander acted as Special Court Martial convening authority for the 54th Signal Battalion and the enlisted men of:

HQ & HQ IFFV
HQ IFFV Arty
272nd Military Police Company
55th MI Detachment
297th Transportation Company

(2) Non Judicial Punishment

A total of 74 Article 15's were issued during the last quarter, ten of these were issued by the Battalion Commander. Eight involved reduction in grade and ten involved forfeiture of pay.

(3) Summary Court Martial

Three Summary Courts were convened during this reporting period. They involved Article 121, 111, and 134 of the UCMJ. Two cases involved pleas of guilty, while one involved a not guilty plea, with a subsequent finding of guilty.

(4) Special Courts Martial

There were five Special Courts Martial during the last quarter. Three involved members of the battalion while two were concerned with members of the 272nd Military Police Company. A breakdown of the charges and findings is as follows:

Case #1 - Art 86 and Art 134 - Guilty on both charges
Case #2 - Art 134 and Art 125 - Guilty on both charges
Case #3 - Art 92 - Guilty
Case #4 - Art 86 - Guilty
Case #5 - Art 121 - Not Guilty

(5) General Court Martial

No General Court Martial was convened during the reporting period.

(6) Board Actions

At the end of the quarter two discharges had been effectuated. One case came under the provisions of AR 635-89 and the individual received an undesirable discharge, the other case under the provisions of AR 635-212 with the individual receiving a general discharge.

c. Emergency Leaves

(1) There were 13 emergency leaves during the reporting period, with no resultant loss in the ability of the battalion to perform its mission.

(2) The local Red Cross Field Director continues to provide invaluable assistance whenever called upon.

d. Promotions

The following cumulative vacancies which existed during this reporting period and the promotions made against these vacancies are reflected below:

	<u>E9</u>	<u>E8</u>	<u>E7</u>	<u>E6</u>	<u>E5</u>	<u>E4</u>
Cumulative vacancies in November:	1	1	1	1	24	39
Promotions made in November:	0	0	0	0	6	26
Cumulative vacancies in December:	0	1	1	0	31	31
Promotions made in December:	0	1	0	0	5	30
Cumulative vacancies in January:	0	0	-2	-2	33	57
Promotions made in January:	0	0	0	0	10	50

e. Personnel Turbulence

At the end of this reporting period the battalion faces a shortage of 31M20's and 31M40's which if not corrected could become a serious mission and maintenance problem.

During the quarter there was a net loss of ten 05C's (Radio teletype operator), thirty 31M's (Radio relay carrier operator), and twenty-one 72B's (Communication Center Specialists).

f. Education

With the acquisition of the necessary information and materials at the end of the last reporting period the battalion education program has been implemented to include administration of High School GED tests, college, and US Army Extension Courses. The interest and participation thus far has been gratifying and promises to become even greater in the future.

5. Civil Affairs

a. Continued Emphasis.

The battalion has within the limits of its resources continued its emphasis on civic action, civil affairs, and revolutionary development. The battalion TOE does not provide for civil affairs personnel or a civil affairs mission but under the staff supervision of the battalion chaplain many civil affairs projects were undertaken or continued in the last quarter.

b. Battalion Aid to Orphanages.

The 54th Signal Battalion continued to sponsor three orphanages in the Nha Trang area. During this quarterly period the men of the battalion gave freely of their time and money to aid the orphans. Specifically the following amounts of money were donated by the troops:

November 1966.....	\$375.00
December 1966.....	\$500.00
January 1967.....	<u>\$565.85</u>
TOTAL	\$1440.85

This money was not given directly to the orphanages but was used to buy clothes, thongs, shoes, and food. At Christmas time over 400 children were supplied with gifts and toys solicited by men of the 54th Signal Battalion (Corps) from family, friends, and organizations in the United States. Christmas parties were held at each of the orphanages and the line companies provided refreshments for all the orphans. Numerous gifts of excess food and fire wood were also donated to the orphanages. The primary contribution, however, was the time, labor, and affection donated by the troops directly to the orphans.

c. Formal English Instruction.

Chaplain Riches, the battalion chaplain, S5, continued until 12 December 1966 an effective program of English instruction for the Vietnamese personnel who work in the battalion area. English was taught for one hour each day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during the first two months of this quarter. The program was discontinued in December when the Vietnamese personnel had reached the point of diminishing returns. The program provided for the Vietnamese personnel at no expense to them a basic foundation in the English language.

d. Sponsorship of a Vietnamese Military Unit

Effective this quarter, the battalion has initiated a program to sponsor the 5th ARVN Railway Security Battalion. The 54th Signal Battalion working through US Advisors will provide assistance to both soldiers and dependants of the ARVN Battalion. Plans have been finished to conduct a joint TET celebration with this unit. The 54th Signal Battalion will donate gifts to all the children of the ARVN 5th Railway Security Battalion and will sponsor a banquet to feed the entire ARVN battalion and their dependents, totaling over 1000 people.

SECTION II COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Part I - Observations (Lessons Learned)

1. Item: Terrain Reconnaissance

Discussion: Terrain Reconnaissance by Signal Commanders is invaluable in the planning and engineering of tactical VHF systems. VHF paths and sites can be selected for trial systems and later profiling. On-the-spot coordination can be effected with the commanders of camps selected for possible relay sites. In Vietnam this reconnaissance can only be performed using helicopter aircraft.

Observation: Organic aircraft of the 54th Signal Battalion were employed in this vital role, in addition to providing courier service and detachment resupply missions. Signal units not possessing organic helicopter aircraft will require support from other aviation sources.

2. Item: Prior Planning

Discussion: Tactical operations in Vietnam are usually oriented on enemy troop locations. As a consequence, operations tend to develop quickly and change drastically and often. Hence detailed planning in advance is made difficult.

Observation: Several operation plans were published by the battalion during the past quarter. Some were never implemented. Many test VHF systems were installed by the battalion and the results were incorporated into operation plans and operation orders published by the battalion. In the case of the IFFV Tac CP a detailed plan was published, cables were installed, and some stand by communications equipment was pre-positioned in anticipation of the possible establishment of the Tac CP. When the decision was made to establish the Tac CP, the prior planning and cable installation facilitated the establishment of the required communications.

3. Item: Aircraft

Discussion: Experience during the quarter confirmed again the requirement for additional aircraft resources established by submission of an MTOE in January 1966. The additional aircraft are required to:

- (1) Improve the daily scheduled IFFORCEV air courier service.
- (2) Eliminate the backlog of cargo and personnel manifested for delivery to outlying signal detachments.
- (3) Provide additional aircraft for command, control, reconnaissance, and liaison.

Although this MTOE was approved by USARV and forwarded to USARPAC on 31 January 1966, no reply or approval has been received from the Department of the Army. The MTOE provided the following aircraft:

ROTARY WING

2 each OH13
3 each UH1D

FIXED WING

4 each U6A

Observation: Experience since June 1966, revealed that the OH13 helicopter and the U6A aircraft cannot efficiently carry the weight or provide the necessary space to satisfy mission requirements. A study of aircraft characteristics indicated that utilization of the U1A "Otter" aircraft and the UH1D helicopter can best satisfy signal battalions present mission requirements. In addition to meeting the requirements for command, control, reconnaissance, and liaison, the combination of these two types of aircraft provide:

- (1) Adequate weight and space capacity.
- (2) Flexibility for operation into fixed wing strips as well as confined areas.
- (3) Instrument capability during periods of inclement weather.

As the original MTOE requirement is still pending, a USARV Form 47 "Requisition for Authorization above Authorized Allowance" was submitted for the U1A aircraft and the additional UH1D helicopter on 2 December 1966.

4. Item: Order Wires and Systems Control

Discussion: The 54th Signal Battalion operates several detachments in support of combat operations in the II CTZ. These detachments operate numerous HF and VHF Communications Sites to provide the means required. The control of the communications operated by the battalion is the responsibility of the S3 SYSCON (Systems Control) which is located in the the Grand Hotel Complex, Nha Trang. It is imperative that SYSCON have the capability of talking directly to each one of the detachments. There are always changes in frequencies, installation of circuits, and establishment of new VHF radio relay systems that must be closely coordinated. However, to effect this coordination, SYSCON must depend upon the in-country common user system because sufficient channels have not been allocated for tactical order wires.

Observations: Tactical communicators are in the position of providing communications to OPCON units via the in-country systems while they lack the means to effectively control and coordinate their own signal elements at the distant ends who must extend these communications to the field. The common user system is too slow, too inefficient, and has too slow a restoration priority to satisfy this important requirement.

5. Item: Centralized Control and Coordination of Civil Affairs Projects.

Discussion: There are numerous units capable and willing to support civil affairs activities in Nha Trang; however, there appears to be little or no centralized guidance or coordination. At Christmas time numerous units provided overlapping sponsorship to some orphanages while many other needy children were receiving no help at all.

Observation: Centralized and coordinated control of civil affairs projects would preclude much inefficient utilization and duplication of resources.

Part II - Recommendations

1. Recommend that doctrine continue to stress the importance of terrain reconnaissance by Signal Officers planning and engineering tactical VHF systems and that continuing emphasis be made regarding the important role that Army Aviation performs in this area.

2. Recommend that the importance of prior planning not be overlooked even in a fast-moving counter-insurgency environment.

3. Recommend the following aircraft resources be allocated to the 54th Signal Battalion:

ROTARY WING

3 each UH1D

FIXED WING

3 each U1A

4. Recommend that all tactical signal detachments have order wires with high restoration priorities to systems control for coordination and control purposes.

5. Recommend that all civil affairs projects within a given area be centrally coordinated and objectively be given priorities in order to optimize the utilization of all available resources.

- ~~3 Incl~~ w/d
1. ~~Chronology~~
2. ~~Bn Field Detachments~~
3. ~~Key Personnel~~

Copies Furnished:

CIN CUSARPAC, ATTN: GPOP-MH
CG, USARV, ATTN: AVC-HIST (trip)
SICO, IFFORCEV (dupe)
CMT, USACGSC (for archives)
CG, USASCS, ATTN: DIR, OD
CO, USAESS, ATTN: DIR, OD
Bn Historian

Willis H. Lowrey
WILLIS H. LOWREY
LTC SigC
Commanding

AVFA-GC-OT (7 Feb 67) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned

Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, APO 96350 28 FEB 1967

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO 96307

1. This headquarters concurs with the contents of the enclosed Operational Report - Lessons Learned with the following comments.

2. Reference Section I - Significant Unit Activities

a. Reference paragraph 3d: This headquarters investigated the deadline problem outlined in USARV (U) message 42594, subject: Maintenance Program, 54th Signal Battalion, dtg 250206Z December 1966. I FFORCEV (U) message B-0787, subject as above, dtg 271010Z January 1967, which was a report of maintenance problems with various types of generators.

b. Reference paragraph 4d: Reported information is correct; however, during the same period, this organization turned back a total of 12 promotion allocations in grades E4 and E5. Turnbacks were primarily caused by ineligible personnel occupying the TOE positions.

c. Reference paragraph 4e: There is a general shortage of the MOS's indicated, because of an overall shortfall in all grades and MOS's experienced in December 1966, as well as an error in requisitioning procedures. The organization failed to requisition sufficient personnel to meet their requirements. This headquarters submitted an emergency requisition which has been validated for fill in late February or early March. USARV is aware of these shortages and will direct as many as possible to the 54th Signal Battalion.

3. Reference Section II, Part II - Recommendations

a. Paragraph 1: No change in current emphasis on the importance of terrain reconnaissance by signal officers planning and engineering tactical VHF systems is anticipated. The role of Army aviation in the performance of reconnaissance was never more highly regarded than at present.

b. Paragraph 3: While it is recognized that the UIA aircraft is more useful for the role required in a signal battalion, the scarcity of available aircraft assets in-country precludes favorable consideration of re-allocation of aircraft.

AVFA-OC-OT


28 FEB 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned

c. Paragraph 4: Within available circuit assets, order wires will be furnished to operating detachments whenever possible.

d. Paragraph 5: Coordination of civil affairs in Nha Trang is accomplished in accordance with I FFORCEV, Letter of Instruction, subject: Community Relations/Friendship Council, dated 9 Jan 66. All major organizations in the area are required to provide one representative as a council member and the 54th Signal Battalion has been so informed.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


R E BROWN
CPT, ACC
ASST ADJUTANT GENERAL

AVHGC-DH (7 Feb 67)

2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 January 1967 (RCS CSFOR-65)

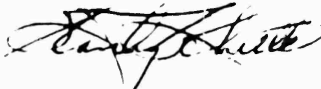
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307 31 MAR 1967

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 January 1967 from Headquarters, 54th Signal Battalion (Corps) as indorsed.

2. Reference Paragraph 3, Part I, Section II, Pages 14 and 15: This headquarters recognizes the requirement for additional aircraft within the 54th Signal Battalion. However, aircraft assets are in critical short supply and cannot be re-allocated to the Signal Battalion from higher priority units. This headquarters has no record of having processed a USARV Form 47 from the 54th Signal Battalion for aircraft in excess of authorized allowances. The MTOE which the unit submitted in January 1967 has been deferred by OSD Program 4.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



STANLEY E. SCHULTS
Major, AGC
Asst Adjutant General

3 Incl
nc

GPOP-OT (7 Feb 67)

3d Ind

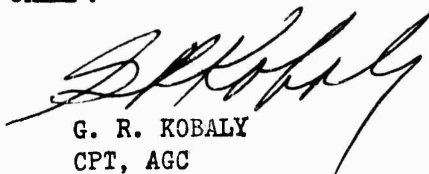
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 January 1967(RCS CSFOR-65) - Hq 54th Sig Bn (Corps)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 4 MAY 1967

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



G. R. KOBALY
CPT, AGC
Asst AC

3 Incl
nc